

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-19 (Cancelled)

Claim 20 (new): A sampler for taking a sample from a body cavity, such as cervical samples, comprising a tubular means to be introduced in said cavity, the introduction end of which is curved to define a central sampling opening, storage means connected to said tubular means and vacuum means connected to said storage means and/or tubular means, said tubular means comprising a rigid tube having a diameter of at least 1 cm, and only at the curved introduction end a number of sampling openings is provided having a diameter of less than 5 mm.

Claim 21 (new): The sampler according to claim 20, comprising liquid containing means and pump means to expel liquid from said liquid containing means to the introduction end of said tube.

Claim 22 (new): The sampler according to claim 20, comprising a further opening for expelling said liquid adjacent to said sample opening.

Claim 23 (new): The sampler according to claim 22, wherein said vacuum means comprise said pump means.

Claim 24 (new): The sampler according to claim 22, wherein said storage means comprise said liquid containing means.

Claim 25 (new): The sampler according to claim 21, wherein said liquid containing means have a volume of less than 10 cc.

Claim 26 (new): The sampler according to claim 20, wherein said vacuum means comprise a plunger-cylinder.

Claim 27 (new): The sampler according to claim 26, wherein said tube comprises said cylinder.

Claim 28 (new): The sampler according to claim 20, comprising sealing means for said openings.

Claim 29 (new): The sampler according to claim 20, wherein said vacuum means comprise a plunger in said tubular means, wherein abutment means are provided to define relative movement of said plunger and tubular means.

Claim 30 (new): The sampler according to claim 29, comprising biasing means for said plunger.

Claim 31 (new): A sampler assembly, comprising a sampler for taking a sample from a body cavity, such as cervical samples, comprising a tubular means to be introduced in said cavity, the introduction end of which is curved to define a central sampling opening, storage means connected to said tubular means and vacuum means connected to said storage means and/or tubular means, said tubular means comprising a rigid tube having a diameter of at least 1 cm, and only at the curved introduction end a number of sampling openings is provided having a diameter of less than 5 mm comprising liquid containing means and pump means to expel liquid from said liquid containing means to the introduction end of said tube, wherein said liquid containing means is filled with a flushing solution.

Claim 32 (new): The sampler assembly according to claim 31, wherein said flushing solution comprises physiological saline.

Claim 33 (new): A kit, comprising the sampler according to claim 20 and a closable container for containing said sample, said container being separate from said sampler.

Claim 34 (new): A kit, comprising the sampler assembly according to claim 31, and a closable container for containing said sample, said container being separate from said sampler.

Claim 35 (new): A method for taking a sample from a body cavity, such as cervical samples, comprising introducing a sampler tube into the entrance of said cavity, moving the tube in said cavity up to contact with the blind end of the cavity and taking a sample by suctioning material at the end of said sampler tube through an opening thereof, wherein after inserting said sampler tube and before taking a sample, a flushing solution is expelled from said sampler tube into said body cavity.

Claim 36 (new): The method according to claim 35, wherein said flushing solution is expelled from a chamber inside said tube and said sample is introduced in said chamber.

Claim 37 (new): The method according to claim 35, wherein said flushing solution comprises a physiological saline solution.

Claim 38 (new): The method according to claim 35, wherein after sampling, a container is provided and the contents of the sampling tube is transferred to said container which is subsequently closed and shipped.

Claim 39 (new): The method according to claim 38, wherein said container is provided with a preserving agent.